



# Energy Briefs

## Helping You Live Energy Efficiently!

### Save Water and Energy

Improving water consumption efficiency saves money and helps protect a valuable natural resource. Here are a few tips to help you use water more wisely.

#### Start With Easy, Low-cost Measures

- ☐ **Fix leaks:** A small faucet leak can quickly add up to hundreds of gallons of water wasted down the drain. Fix leaky faucets and other plumbing fixtures quickly.
- ☐ **Do full loads:** Operate water-using appliances, such as dishwashers and clothes washers, with full loads or with water-saving settings. Using energy saving features such as cold water rinse or air dry will further decrease operating costs.
- ☐ **Avoid wasteful habits:** Sweep outdoor walks rather than hosing them off. Close sink basins to catch water rather than letting it flow down the drain while shaving, washing dishes and other uses.
- ☐ **Don't use toilets as trash cans:** A standard toilet uses 3.5 gallons of water per flush. It takes energy to purify water before it reaches your home as well as to process sewage after it leaves.

#### Saving Energy and Water

**Showerheads:** An average family spends about 12 percent of its heating bill to heat water for bathing, laundry, and other domestic uses. Much of this water is used for showers. Installing low-flow showerheads that use less than 2.5 gallons per minute will save you money. A good fixture will save water and provide a great shower. Check with *Consumer Reports* and other publications for product reviews.

**Other water heater tips:** While you are considering water saving options, don't forget to wrap your water heater with an insulating jacket if it is warm to the touch. You can buy a jacket from a local hardware or building supply store for less than \$20. It will save you many times its cost in energy savings.

Keeping the temperature of your water heater set to approximately 120°F can also save money. Some units are set at 140°F or higher which wastes energy and can cause serious injury from scalding.

#### The Next Step

**Water saving devices:** Federal plumbing regulations require that all new toilets be water saving models. These fixtures use 1.6 gallons of water per flush. The two gallons of water per flush that they save can quickly add up.

For some homes that savings can be over \$90 per year on water bills. The water savings can quickly repay the cost of new, modern plumbing fixtures.

#### Outdoors

**Xeriscaping:** During warm weather, outdoor watering of your home's landscape can be costly. However, good landscape design and maintenance practices can dramatically reduce water needs.

Xeriscaping is landscaping that requires little supplemental watering or other maintenance and uses sensible plant materials for the local environment. Your local Cooperative Extension Agency is a great source of information on water wise practices for your landscape.

**Rainwater Harvesting:** Catching rainwater can be as simple as a barrel beneath your gutter or as complex as a catchment system with a cistern. Either way, you will catch water that should be directed away from the house and use it on your landscaping where it is needed.

Learn other ways to  
conserve energy and save money at  
[www.energy.sc.gov](http://www.energy.sc.gov)

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